

had a Wednesday group, and all these guys would meet. They basically had formally retired from their professions, but they really didn't retire from life, and they were having one great time.

Our prayers are extended to his loved ones. May they be comforted by the love and memories they hold in their hearts, and may the angels carry their beloved husband, father, and grandfather to a place of peace and joy.

□ 1215

HONORING PENN STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS FOR THEIR FUNDRAISING FOR CHILDHOOD CANCER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor, thank, and express my sincerest gratitude for an incredible group of students at Penn State University.

This group of students have spent the last year dedicating countless hours to support a fantastic cause benefiting pediatric cancer patients. I am talking about THON.

This year-long fundraising effort culminates in an annual 46-hour dance marathon to support more than 4,500 families financially and emotionally with children who are battling cancer.

On February 17, Penn State students, staff, family, friends, volunteers, and spectators filled the Bryce Jordan Center for the 51st Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon, more widely known as THON, to raise money for the Four Diamonds Foundation.

THON was founded in 1973 by Penn State fraternities and sororities. What began as a small fundraiser bringing in \$2,000 in its inaugural year has flourished into a campus-wide effort with more than 16,000 student volunteers across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

In 1977, THON partnered with the Four Diamonds Foundation, and since then, not a single Four Diamonds family has received a medical bill thanks to the tireless work and dedication of Penn State students.

The Four Diamonds Foundation was founded by Charles and Irma Millard in 1972 after their son, Christopher, lost his battle with cancer at 11 years old. Before Christopher passed away, he wrote a story about a great knight who sought out the four diamonds of courage, wisdom, honesty, and strength to be saved from the evil sorceress. His parents realized those four qualities were all necessary to overcome cancer, and they created the Four Diamonds Foundation in his memory.

Over the past 50 years, THON has grown into the largest student-run philanthropy in the world.

Students stood from 6 p.m. on Friday, February 17 until 4 p.m. on Sunday, February 19. While it was an im-

pressive feat to hold, what is even more incredible is the drive, fortitude, and flexibility these students showed in their commitment to this cause.

This year, Penn State students raised a record \$15,006,132.46, and to date, students have shattered records and raised more than \$200 million, making THON the largest student-run philanthropic effort in the world.

Of course, their dedication is to be applauded, but ask any Penn State student, and they will agree: THON isn't about them. It is about the children and the families fighting cancer.

THON is for the kids, and it is for the families to focus on celebrating more birthdays, piano recitals, science fairs, graduations, and every other milestone a child should celebrate without fear.

THON exists so one day parents never have to hear the words: "Your child has cancer."

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of these students, but more importantly, I am proud of the children and the families who have the courage to fight back against pediatric cancer.

Congratulations once again to everyone involved in this year's THON. We are.

ADDRESSING THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKIYE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. SANTOS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the Republic of Türkiye—the more I learn, the more I am appalled that they are allowed to remain in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

From their historic and well-documented persecution of Armenians, human rights abuses—even today—and their objections to Sweden and Finland joining NATO, why do we keep or even trust Türkiye as a partner in maintaining world order?

In major issues related to Iran, Syria, Russia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, Türkiye is involved and not always helpful to our interests. It is time to rethink this arrangement.

My district in New York has a sizable population of Armenian descendants, multigeneration, first generation, and new arrivals. These citizens have close ties and legitimate concerns about what is going on over there in Armenia.

To my constituents: Yes, I will cosponsor H. Res. 108, but I will also ask this legislative body and my friends in the Senate to reconsider our continued partnership with Türkiye.

PROTECTING THE NATURAL FAMILY IS ESSENTIAL FOR OUR NATION TO PROSPER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. MILLER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, for years we have witnessed a con-

certed effort by activists on the left to abolish the natural family.

The natural family, a man and woman committed for life to each other and to their children, was ordained by God as the foundation of our society. The natural family is essential for our Nation to prosper because the family is the root of self-government, service, community, personal responsibility, and faith in God.

That is why today I am launching the Congressional Family Caucus. The Congressional Family Caucus will serve to defend the natural family from attempts by the radical left to erode this core foundation of our society.

The left advances abortion, fatherlessness, surgical castration, and atheism. These woke progressives attempt to diminish parental rights by eliminating parental consent and replacing families with the State.

Families are the bedrock of our values and protectors of our youth. According to Deuteronomy 6, in the context of traditional family in the home, we are to diligently instruct our children to love God and to obey His commandments.

I believe we have a moral obligation as servant Representatives to protect and to conserve the family. Families have made this country great. I am honored to be joined by Representative DIANA HARSHBARGER from Tennessee and Representative BRIAN BABIN from Texas in our efforts to protect the family.

CHILDREN'S INNOCENCE MUST BE PROTECTED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Georgia (Ms. GREENE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. GREENE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today I announce that I am reintroducing my bill, the Protect Children's Innocence Act. This bill will stop gender-affirming care on children. It will protect children from the heinous and evil ideology that is grooming kids and making a profit off of horrific surgeries that mutilate their genitals, give them life-altering medications like puberty blockers, hormone therapy that will have permanent damage to their bodies for the rest of their lives before these kids are even grown up, before they have graduated from high school, before they are old enough to vote, before they are old enough to get a tattoo—ink on their own skin—before they are old enough to join the military, before they are old enough to make adult decisions.

This is an important bill that Congress must pass.

My bill will charge any person who knowingly performs gender-affirming care on a minor with a Class C felony. It will prohibit all taxpayer-funded gender-affirming care. It will prohibit institutions of higher education from providing instruction on gender-affirming care.

There is nothing affirming about lying to children that they can change

their gender because you cannot change your gender.

My bill will deem aliens who are determined to have performed gender-affirming care on a minor as ineligible to receive visas or be admitted into the United States.

We need to take a strong stand in the United States of America that we do not abuse our children or sexualize them in any way.

This is an important bill that must be passed, and I will give you some examples.

In 2021, there was a father in Texas who lost custody of his twin 7-year-old sons because he attempted to stop one of the boys from transitioning his gender. The mother began transitioning the boy when he was only 2 years old and then tried to enroll him in a pediatric gender clinic at age 5. This child, this young boy, needs to be protected, and his father has the rights to do it. They didn't give him his rights.

Last summer, Boston Children's Hospital released videos promoting gender dysphoria and offering sterilization, castration, and mutilation of children. These videos not only explained its genital mutilation surgeries, but they were also promoting these surgeries to kids and their parents. By the way, this is for profit.

Also, just recently, Jamie Reed, who worked at one of more than 100 pediatric gender clinics across the United States, publicly came out to discuss the atrocities happening to children at these gender clinics.

When a female takes testosterone, the profound and permanent effects of the hormone can be seen in a matter of months. Voices drop, beards sprout, body fat is redistributed, sexual interest explodes, aggression increases, and mood can be unpredictable. One of the side effects includes sterility.

As a matter of fact, after only 4 to 5 years of taking testosterone, there have been many young women under the age of 18 that have had to have hysterectomies because of the damage done inside of them.

Even more horrific is the Governor of California, Gavin Newsom, signed a bill into law to provide refuge for trans kids and their families. This bill will protect trans kids and their families that flee to California from States like Alabama, Texas, or Idaho, or any other State criminalizing the parents of trans kids for allowing them to receive gender-affirming care.

My bill will protect these children and stop a State like California and the monsters and the groomers and the child predators in that State that look to damage them before they ever grow up.

There are many States that are working hard to protect kids, but we don't have enough States doing it. That is why it is the responsibility of Republicans in Congress to protect children.

This is imperative.

We know what the left is trying to do, and we should have listened to

them when they told us. Remember the San Francisco men's choir actually singing a song announcing that they are coming for our children? That is a threat that we should not ignore.

We have had enough with drag queen shows in elementary schools and middle schools and high schools. We have had enough of drag queens gyrating in front of children in the public square.

These groomers and child predators must be stopped because they are sexualizing children for profit in a multibillion-dollar medical industry that looks to grow and grow. Something must be done to protect the sacred identity of children because God made children and God made all of us, male and female, in His image, and God doesn't make mistakes.

I urge every single Republican and all Members of Congress to cosponsor my bill. We must get it passed. This isn't just a Republican issue. This is an issue across the board. All voters agree.

UNION POWER IS DIMINISHING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. SALINAS) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SALINAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the PRO Act.

My family's story is an American one. A union one. It is the story of how a good-paying union job gave a family of immigrants and first-generation Americans a pathway out of poverty and into the middle class.

Sadly, stories like mine are harder to find these days. Unions have seen their power diminished as the American Dream grows further and further out of reach for the average working family. That is why I am so proud to be an original cosponsor of the Protecting the Right to Organize Act because it is time to make that dream a reality again.

The PRO Act will empower Oregonians and all Americans to exercise their right to organize, hold employers accountable for violating their rights, and participate in free and fair union elections.

This landmark legislation will go a long way toward protecting the most vulnerable workers who courageously showed up for their communities even during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. From teachers to nurses to home care workers, these people—many of whom are women and women of color—are everyday heroes, and they deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

□ 1230

In 2022, America's unionization rate fell to its lowest on record, but in Oregon, we reached new heights.

Our State is home to 318,000 proud unionized workers, making up about 18 percent of our workforce. In fact, we are now the fourth most unionized State in America, something I know Oregonians and we all should be proud of.

In the face of record-breaking corporate profits and a growing wealth gap, workers in Oregon have united to champion a deeply American cause: economic opportunity for all.

From Starbucks to Fred Meyer, Naticco to Burgerville, working Oregonians from all walks of life are coming together to say we have had enough. We have had enough of corporate greed and union busting. We have had enough of wage stagnation and dangerous work environments. We have had enough of fighting tooth and nail for the benefits that we deserve. We have had enough.

Now, the burden falls on us. As lawmakers, we have a duty to answer the rising call for change. We have a duty to not only protect good-paying jobs but to expand that opportunity for everyone because, at the end of the day, America is only as strong as its middle class.

Let's pass the PRO Act and show the world how strong we really are.

PROTECTING THE TRADITIONAL FAMILY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. HARSHBARGER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. HARSHBARGER. Mr. Speaker, I start by saying I am honored to be the co-chair of the Congressional Family Caucus.

We have seen the decline of the traditional family for many years, and it is not by chance this has occurred. We have come to a point in society that the restoration of the family is of the utmost importance.

Russell Kirk wrote about the problem this way: "We cannot feel any affection for our country unless we first love those near to us. The conservative feels that the family is the natural source and core of any good society; that when the family decays, a dreary collectivism is sure to supplant it; and that the principal instrument of moral instruction, ordinary education, and satisfactory economic life always must remain the family."

Kirk goes on to say: "Now very powerful forces are at work to diminish the influence of the family among us, and even to destroy the family for all purposes except mere generation. Some of these forces are material and unintentional: . . . cheap amusements and transportation, which encourage members of the family to spend nearly all their time outside the family circle; the assumption of the old educational functions of the family by public schools . . ."

He continues: "But other forces hostile to the family are not merely impersonal and unconscious; they are more or less deliberate, and they may be countered by intelligent action in the social and educational and political spheres. The chief of these ominous forces is the deliberate desire of certain people to have the political state assume nearly all the responsibilities